

Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club  
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail  
Ocean Street between Berkley  
and Ocean avenues  
Beach Haven  
Ocean County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1105

HABS  
NJ  
15-BEHAV,  
11

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LITTLE EGG HARBOR YACHT CLUB

HABS NO. NJ-1105

Location: Ocean Street, between Berkeley and Ocean Avenues, Beach Haven, Ocean County, New Jersey

Present Owner: Members, Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club  
P.O. Box 284  
Beach Haven, New Jersey 08008

Present Use: Sailing and social club, emphasis on children's programming

Significance: This is a typical example of the yacht clubs built in resort communities along the New Jersey coast during the early twentieth century. Recreational clubs such as this represent nearly two centuries of boating in this region. This particular yacht club was erected in Italianate style, designed in stucco but executed in cedar shingle.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: A building committee was formed and a lot purchased in 1913. The structure was erected 1915-16, and according to the minutes of the board, the first meeting was held in August of 1916.
2. Architect: The Yacht Club was designed by Moffet and Stewart, architects, of Camden, New Jersey.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The club building is owned by the Members, Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club.
4. Builders: The building was erected by William Butler, local builder and former mayor of Beach Haven. The builder for the 1977 renovation was Ralph Parker, and for the 1990 porch extension, Jimmy Tallent.
5. Original plans and construction: Original drawings were located and copies are included as figure pages to this document.
6. Alterations and Additions: The building underwent a significant reconstruction in 1977. Most of the second floor porch was enclosed, while new second-story porches were built out on the east and west sides. A flight of stairs which rose to the second-floor porch's central bay, facing the water, were removed prior to the 1977 reconstruction. The porch was extended in 1990.

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B. Historical Context:

Several men interested in watersports (particularly yacht racing) and looking for a dock to tie up their boats founded the Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club (LEHYC) on July 13, 1912. The Beach Haven Times reported that "Most of these officials are prominent Philadelphia business and Professional men who are interested in Beach Haven and have their summer homes here."<sup>1</sup> The club attracted 45 members in two weeks, and a Ladies' Auxiliary held an organizational meeting on August 22, 1912 at Mrs. Charles W. Beck's home. Her husband served as Commodore the first two years. At first, the club met in the Hotel Baldwin--one of Beach Haven's grand hotels. In 1913 dues were \$5 for an individual, and \$10 for a family. The men set out to build their own facility, forming a building committee by 1913.<sup>2</sup> Beck sold land to the club for \$1,500, which was raised by the Ladies' Auxiliary, and selling chancee on a Ford. The club hired Moffet & Stewart, architects from Camden, got a mortgage from the Tuckerton Bank, and local builder William Butler erected the structure on landfill from the dredging of the Liberty Thorofare. Although the board meeting minutes tell little about the building's construction, on August 5, 1916 members held their first recorded meeting in the clubhouse.<sup>3</sup>

The 1920 membership list--97 senior and 21 junior members--shows a preponderance of people from Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, Chestnut Hill, Germantown, Bryn Mawr, Overbrook, as well as Beach Haven and several New Jersey towns. The obituary of one of the founders provides a sense of these men's institutional affiliations. Morton Gibbons-Neff's passing was recorded in the Beach Haven Times on September 4, 1964. A resident of Narberth, Gibbons-Neff had been an independent insurance broker, president of Poor Richards Club, Director of the Franklin Institute, Union League, and the Merion Cricket Club. Apparently many other LEHYC's members belonged to the Merion Cricket Club, a connection which is still discernible today. Because of shifting demographics, the club draws heavily from New Jersey towns, and many older people who have retired to Beach Haven. Membership in the 1930s seems to have stayed around 200-250. The Ladies' Auxiliary maintained separate membership lists until 1935.

It is difficult to determine the club's exclusivity in its early decades. We have seen that the members were linked by their connections to Philadelphia and its social circles. The club also had a preponderance of Quakers. The minutes record several disputes over accepting members, relating to whether the applicants were known to the

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<sup>1</sup> Beach Haven Times, July 13, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> J.A. Coole, "Long Beach History," Beach Haven Times, November 9, 1937.

<sup>3</sup> Gretchen Coyle, , "The Little Egg Beater," July 3, 1992.

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current members, and to the unclear procedures. A 1964 spoof written for the club's 50th anniversary dinner refers to a blood test, letters of recommendation, and the "cream of the crop."<sup>4</sup> But besides the obvious fact that many of the members lived in the same places, and belonged to other parallel institutions such as the Merion Cricket Club, the requirements of membership would need more exploration.

In the club's early years it participated in races of power boats, cat boats, and sneak boxes. Ties with the region's other yacht clubs began almost immediately; the first annual cruise to the Island Heights Yacht Club was on August 1, 1914. In 1933 the club decided to build up a substantial summer camp, which has now become the heart of summer programming. LEHYC originally opened from June 1st to the first week of September, being completely shut down during the rest of the year. Off-season the younger members stored their boats in Ostendorff's Garage, the largest auto garage on the east coast at the time of its construction in 1912.<sup>5</sup> They would return to Beach Haven on spring weekends from prep school and college to prepare their boats. The LEHYC now accommodates activities year-round, especially once a heating system was added in 1977.

For several decades the Club's social activities included heavy drinking, perhaps best represented by the following song:

There's no haven like Beach Haven  
There's no Haven I know  
Where you'll find a better gang of real guys  
Where land breezes bring those great big green flies  
Where your week-end guests can see the sunrise,  
thru bloodshot red eyes then go to bed  
There's no haven like Beach Haven  
There's no haven that I know  
Where you get a chance to see the sun go down and drink  
Moon come up and drink, moon go down and drink  
Where we sit and drink the liquor you've been saving  
It's Beach Haven for me

Today the club is oriented around the racing and summer activities of the children's camp, as well as the racing and social programs designed for the adults.

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<sup>4</sup> Program for 50th anniversary dinner, July 14, 1964, memorabilia book.

<sup>5</sup> John Bailey Lloyd, Six Miles at Sea, pp.100-3.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION<sup>6</sup>

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A three-story rectangular plan, Italianate structure with a hipped roof. Distinctive 4' paired roof brackets add support to a 4' roof overhang. The building was originally surrounded on the north, south, and west sides by an unusual double story porch 4 bays by 7 bays; the porch created a second facade for the building. The second story of the porch had striking segmental arches, while the alternating bays and columns provided strong vertical elements. On the second floor, this porch has been mostly enclosed and incorporated into the building, mitigating the vertical emphasis and filling in many of the segmental arches. The new west-facing porch has five bays. A cross-braced balustrade design flanked with vertical posts (not Italianate) is a unifying design motif in the old and new portions of the building. Although the building's architectural character is primarily Italianate, and was designed for stucco, it was executed in cedar shingle--giving it an unusual appearance.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in excellent condition.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The core rectangular building is 28'-6" x 48'-0", while the original porch width is 9'7". Thus the second floor on the bay side extends an additional 9'7" since it was enclosed from the porch. The building's envelope extends further to the east and west because of recently-constructed porches (about 8' to the east, and 15' to the west).
2. Foundations: There are no pilings; the building has continuous footings and grade beams, resting on bay mud.
3. Wall construction: The walls are covered with western cedar shingles; original Jersey cedar shingles lasted from construction until 1984.
4. Structural system, framing: The structure is of brace framing. Studs rise two stories but not to the third, making the building very "flexible." as a result, the third floor used to sway with too many people. The joists are of rough-hewn, long-leaf yellow pine. The structural system was modified during the 1977 renovation.

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<sup>6</sup> Architect Wes Heillman, also a LEHYC member, provided many of the details in this architectural description.

5. Porches: The porches have been altered from the original design. An unshaded narrow second story balcony overlooks the tennis courts on the east side, and wraps partly around the north side, where a staircase extends to the ground level. On the bay side, a second-story covered porch, accessed from the interior, faces the water. Parts of the third floor (the north, south, and east edges) also serve as unsheltered porch space. In constructing the new second floor porches, the architect used the building's original balustrade pattern, and duplicated the large paired roof brackets at half scale for the east porch.
6. Chimneys: There are two chimneys; a prominent chimney is located on south side, with fireplaces on the first and second floors, and a smaller boiler chimney, on the north side.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Most of the doors have nine lights on the upper half, and two vertical panels below.
  - b. Windows: The windows are double-hung eight-over-one-light and six-over-one-light windows.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: The roof is hipped. It was originally covered with Jersey Cedar shingles, now with synthetic roof tiles. The roof structure is secured with tie beams.
  - b. Cornice: The cornice consists of a plain frieze board with large (4') paired brackets.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
  - a. First floor: The first floor houses the entry hall, offices, and bathrooms and lockers.
  - b. Second floor: The second floor serves as the main meeting room. The 1977 reconstruction opened up what had been several small rooms and the porch, to form a more open space broken up by structural wall elements from what was originally the building's exterior.
  - c. Third floor: Designed as the ballroom, the third floor is now mostly open space used by children as a game room. A small stage, in the original design but apparently closed off until the 1977 reconstruction, lies at the north end. The stage is flanked by a storage room and the "historian's closet." This floor has the most original features.

2. Stairways: The building has original stairs--with vertical square balustrade posts and an attractive system of landings, half-flights, and posts.
3. Flooring: The original wood flooring on the first floor was replaced with red quarry tile in 1977. The second floor's tongue-and-groove-wood flooring is mostly covered by carpeting, while the third floor has the original tongue-and-groove flooring laid on a diagonal.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are wood with plaster finish in original portions, now drywall in many places. The third floor has exposed rafters; the second floor ceiling is now dull varnished red cedar with acoustical tiles.
5. Doorways and doors: The doorways have simple flat trim, while the doors are mostly five horizontal panel.
6. Decorative features: The extensive reconstruction on the second floor has altered distinctive features.
7. Mechanical systems:
  - a. Lighting fixtures: The second floor now has "invisible" recessed lighting in ceiling.
  - b. Heating: The building is currently heated with electrical baseboard heat, part of the 1977 renovation.

D. Site:

1. General Setting: The building faces the bay, separated from the water by a few yards of patio. The club originally stood alone in the sand and marsh, as seen in old photographs.
2. Outbuildings: Several outbuildings are part of the club, including the children's clubhouse (recent) and the boat storage barn.
3. Landscaping, enclosures: Adjacent to the club's east side are tennis courts. A cement dance floor lies between the club and the bay, to the north.

Prepared by: Alison Isenberg  
HABS Historian  
Summer 1992

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Old views: The club archives contain photographs, especially in the memorabilia books, and numerous photos are found on the club's third floor walls. According to Wes Heilman, many negatives were recently donated to the archives from a former member's attic.

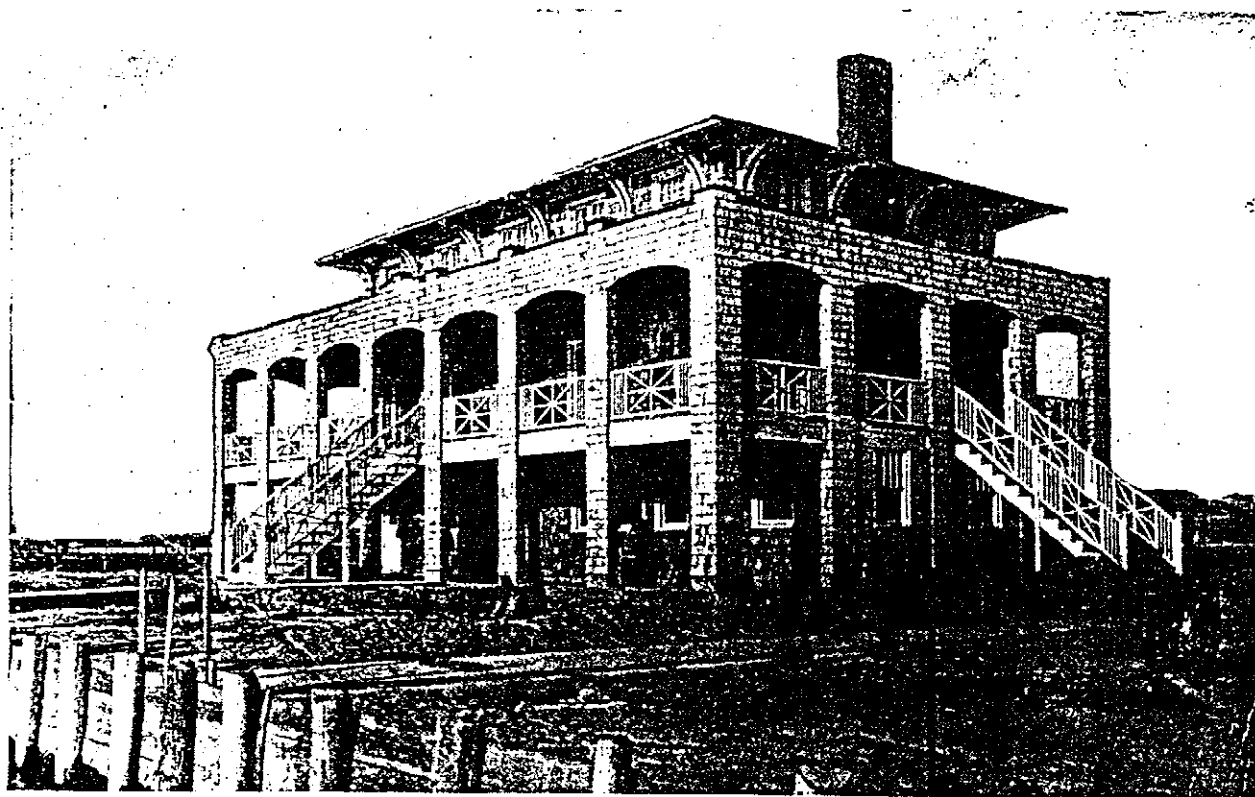
B. Primary and unpublished sources: LEHYC has a volunteer historian, Gretchen Coyle, and a well-organized room with historical materials. The club has minute books from 1912-1950, several substantial memorabilia books, regatta and race results, maps, surveys, and boat plans. In addition, local newspapers often reported on events at the yacht club. One might also find material at the Long Beach Island Historical Society, and with the assistance of John Bailey Lloyd, historian and Ocean County librarian. The Club's first official historian, Robert F. Morris, serving 1956-1983, drafted a history of LEHYC. See also:

Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991.

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian. The project was completed during summer 1992. The project historian was Alison Isenberg (University of Pennsylvania). The photography was produced by David Ames, University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering.





LITTLE EGG HARBOR YACHT CLUB, Beach Haven, N. J.

"Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club, Beach Haven, N.J."  
historic view, date and photographer unknown

courtesy of the Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club collection



"Club House at Beach Haven, N.J. for Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club"  
Moffett & Stewart, Inc., architects, Sept. 16, 1915  
1/4" to 1'- 0"

drawing continued on next page

courtesy of the Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club collection

"Club House at Beach Haven, N.J. for Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club"  
Moffett & Stewart, Inc., architects, Sept. 16, 1915  
1/4" to 1' - 0"

courtesy of the Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club collection

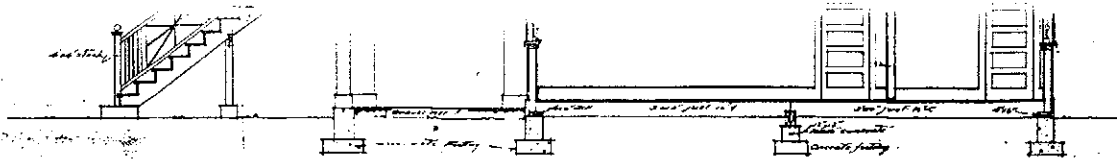
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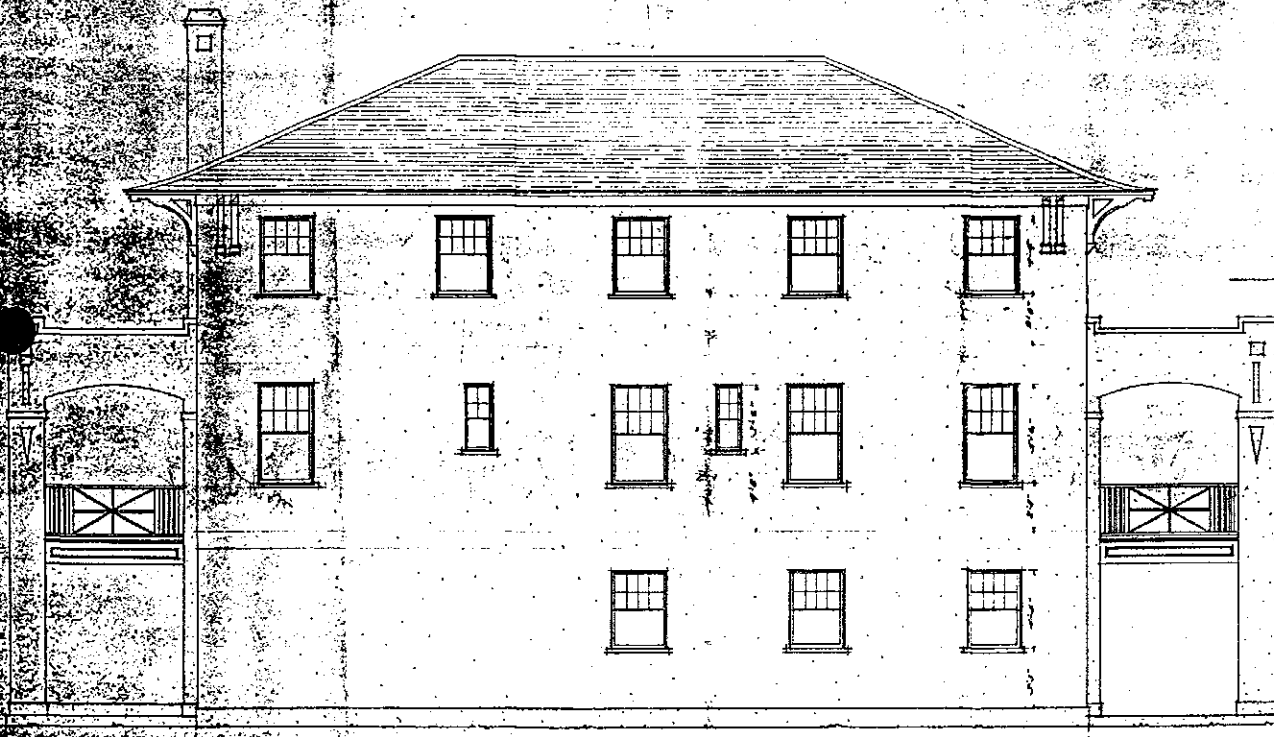
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CROSS SECTION



FRONT ELEVATION

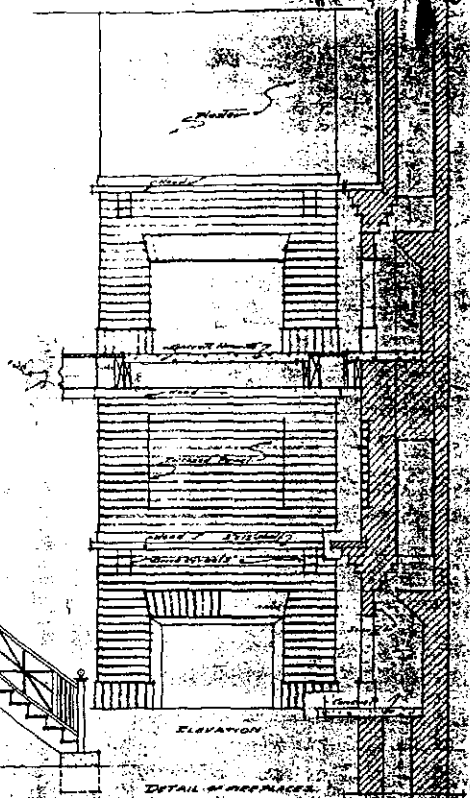
CLUB HOUSE	
AT BEACH HAVEN, N.J.	
FOR	
LITTLE EGG HARBOR	
YACHT CLUB	
DESIGNED BY	MOFFETT & STEWART, INC.
DRAWN BY	JOHN J. STEWART
DATE	SEP. 16, 1915
COPYRIGHT BY MOFFETT & STEWART, INC.	

"Club House at Beach Haven, N.J. for Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club"  
Moffett & Stewart, Inc., architects, Sept. 16, 1915  
1/4" to 1' - 0"

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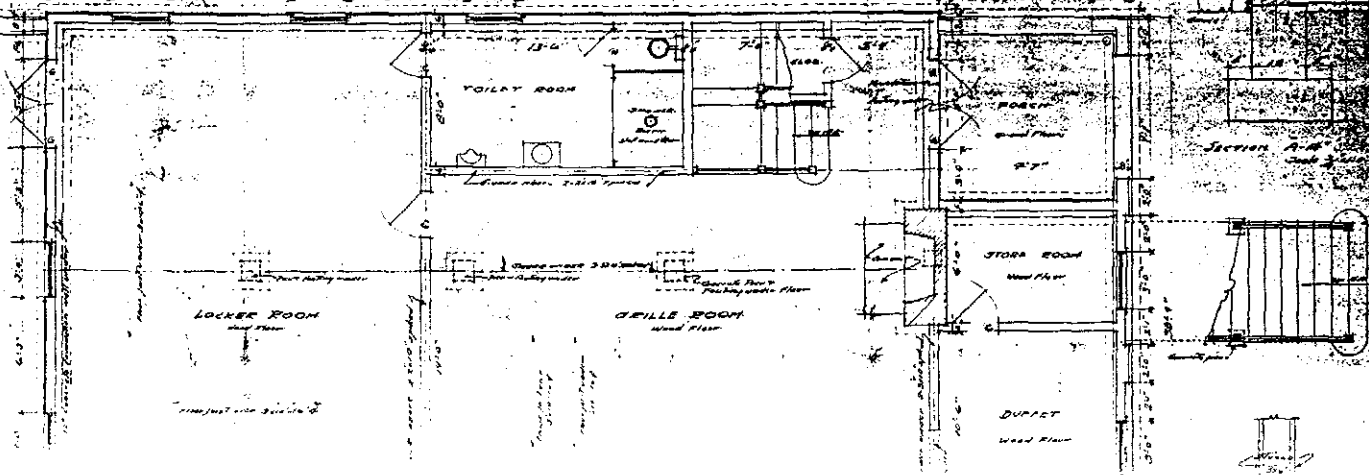


LEFT SIDE ELEVATION



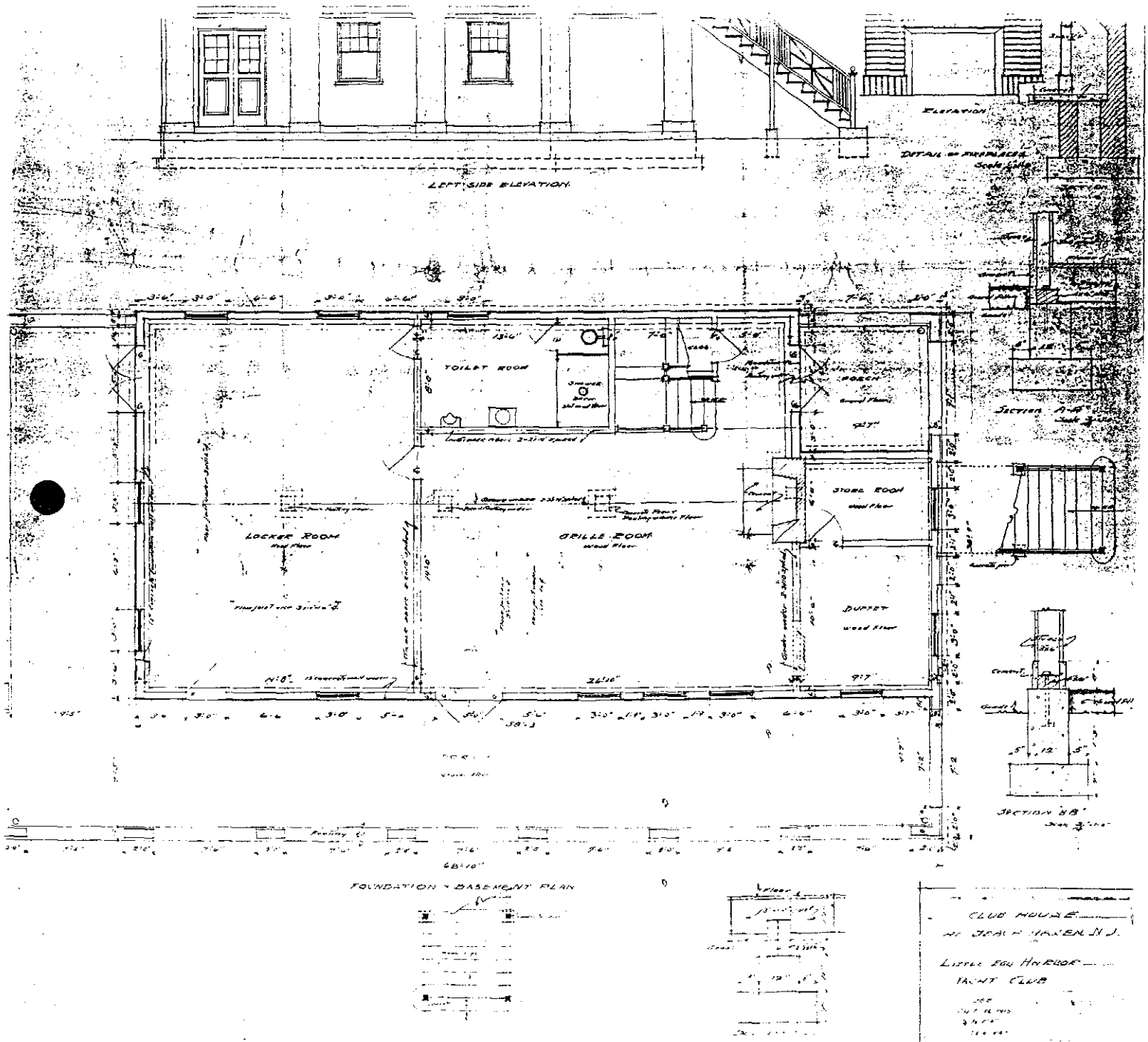
ELEVATION

DETAIL OF REPAIRS

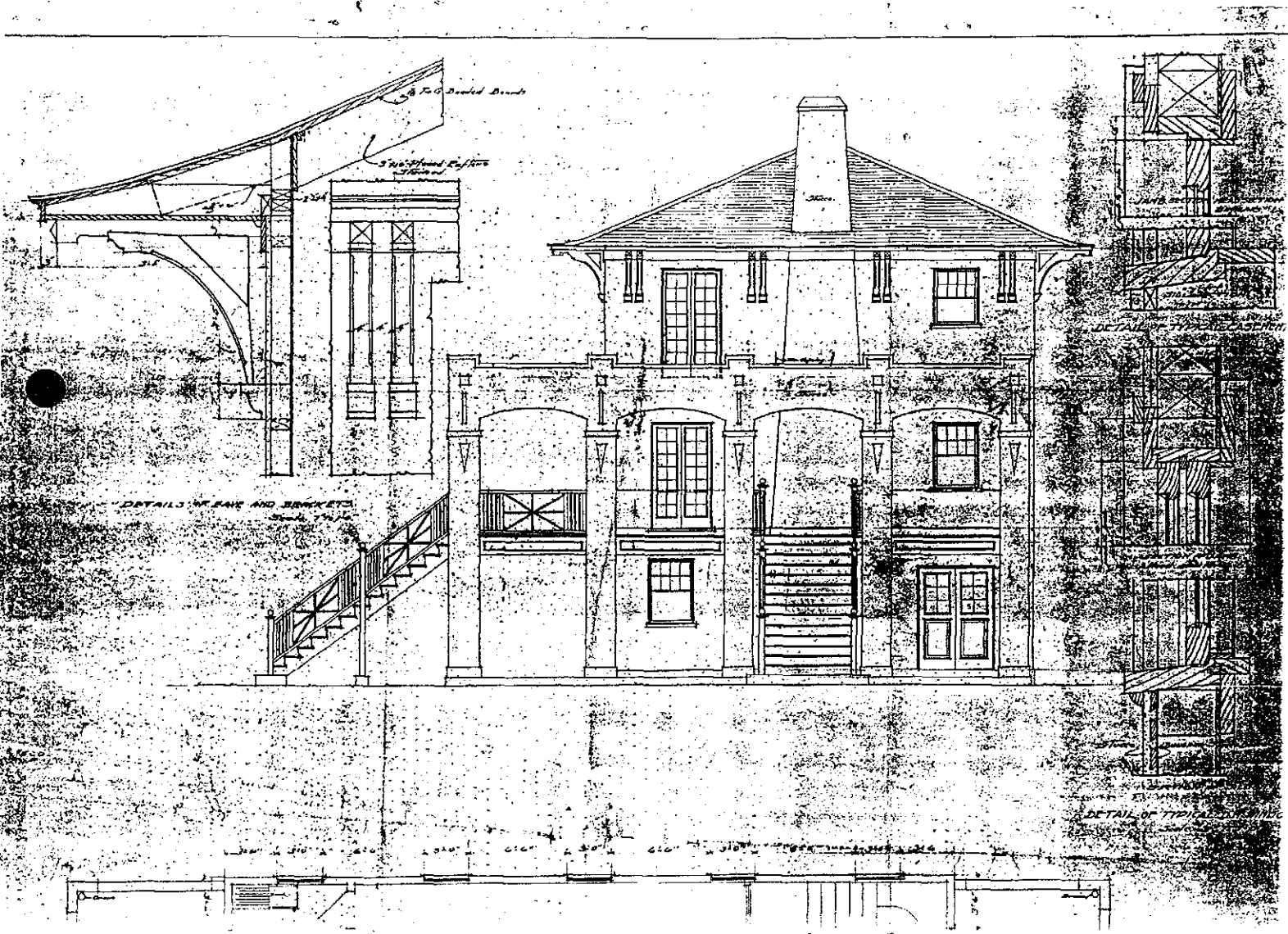


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drawing continued on next page



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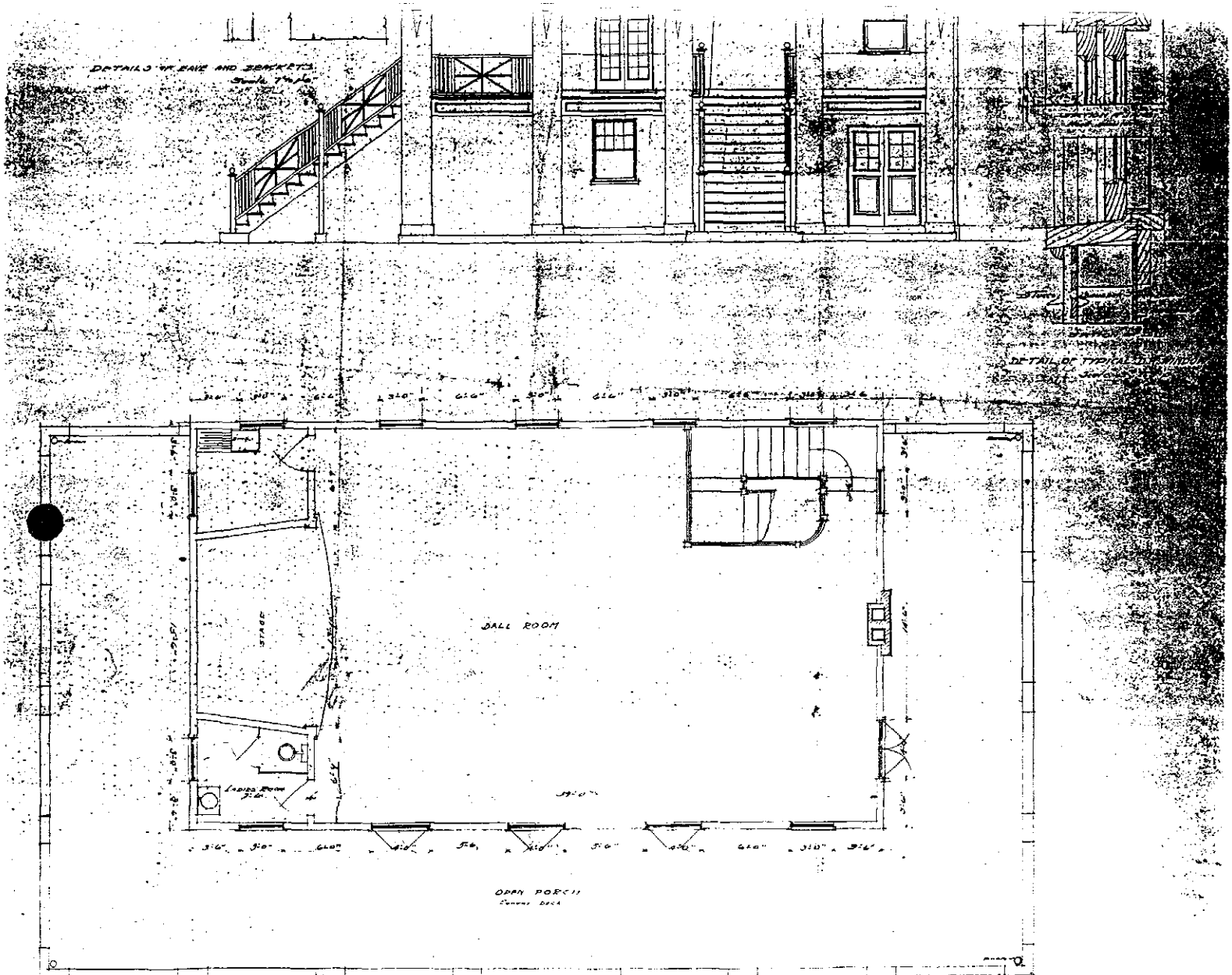


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CLUB HOUSE  
AT BEACH HAVEN, N.J.  
LITTLE EGG HARBOR  
YACHT CLUB  
NO. 1105  
Sept. 16, 1915  
1/4" to 1'-0"

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